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BY

SEYMOUR S. TIBBALS.

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A MONOLOG

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When Monty Came Home From the Marne.

Ever since that memorable Good Friday in the year 1917 when the whistles of Washington announced to the waiting city and the eager world that the President's signature had been affixed to a momentous document America has been waking up. At last we heard the call of duty, we were aroused to our danger, we could no longer resist our destiny. For months many of us impatient at the delay had wondered when the land of the free and the home of the brave would enter the world war. We knew that it was our duty to share with all free states the burden and the sacrifice for Liberty—to help make the world a place where God's free people can live at peace and enjoy whatever prosperity comes to them by right. And on that Good Friday afternoon when the whistles of Washington proclaimed to the waiting world that we were in at last, we all knew that we were in to stay until the victory.

When America, the sleeping young giant, heard the call to arms we were taunted by the jibes of the enemy across the sea. "What can you hope to do against us?" roared the tyrant. "We have been preparing for this war for more than forty years while you have been doing nothing. Absolutely nothing. You've sat still and let us prepare. You believed foolishly in peace and now when the war has come you are a helpless nation that doesn't know which way to turn."

But in this the military despotism of Prussia was wrong. The United States had not been asleep during the forty years of German planning. We, too, had been preparing, but preparing in a different way from the Huns. Instead of stripping our children of their self-respect, we had buckled on them an armor of pride and when they came forth and joined hands with the children of the free across the wide ocean it was seen that all the hordes of the armies of the Kaiser couldn't lick them.

In that army of freedom that came at last across the sea was Monty Culver and it is about the big day in Monty's life that I want to tell you. A typical American was Monty—a lad from a Christian home on an Ohio farm. He was a widow's son. His father had lost an arm when a drummer boy at the battle of Shiloh, and Monty had been taught from the cradle to abhor war. Through all his boyhood he had helped his father and he early learned to appreciate the price that some men pay for Liberty. Reared in an atmosphere of peace he watched the veterans of the Grand Army Post when they made their annual pilgrimage to the village cemetery in a spirit of reverance and awe. When he reached his majority the little band of grayed-haired veterans in blue had dwindled until they could no longer appear upon parade. War had faded into the past and was only a matter of history. Some years before the one-armed figure of his father had crossed into the shadow and Monty and the little mother toiled peacefully upon the farm. He loved the sheep and cattle on the hills. He tenderly watered the flowers about the little home. On Sunday they drove to the village church and he dozed serenely as the old pastor expounded the gospel. He was a man of peace, his whole heart filled with love and solicitude for the little mother. It was with a feeling of regret he killed a chicken for the Sabbath dinner and when a faith-

ful old horse fell and broke its leg he called a neighbor to come and end its suffering. He read his Bible and sang the songs of peace. Then the war cloud burst and he grieved for the agony of the men and women "over there." But it was to him a thing afar off and as he knelt at night beside his bed he thanked God that he was an American and lived in the land of the free.

Then at last came that memorable Good Friday and the whistles at Washington aroused the nation and echoed among the hills of Ohio. The spirit of his father awakened in Monty and he heard the call to arms. In the falling twilight of a May evening, with the breath of the honeysuckle stealing through the open windows he gathered the little mother in his big strong arms and told her he must go. Like thousands of other American mothers she held back her tears and bravely bade him goodbye when he left to enlist in the Marines. There were weeks of loneliness for her on the little farm while he trained at Paris Island. There were boxes of things he liked, sent to him in camp while the packet of letters from her boy increased in the top drawer of the bureau in her bedroom. Then for two weeks she did not hear and she knew that he had gone across.

The German artillery became violent. Over our trenches streamed a fire of shells. They fell tearing away whole banks of earth at once, they exploded thunderously, in a cloud of dust and stifling smoke. Monty looked for the worst; he suspected a close attack, a hand-to-hand clash. Suddenly a great cry rang out: "The gas!!"

Over there from the enemy's lines came great greenish balls, rolling close to the earth, rolling straight toward our boys. It was coming with a deadly surety amidst a tornado of artillery. Orders were shouted back and forth. "Look out! The gas! Put on the masks!"

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